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FLORIDA HEALTH PROMOTES BREASTFEEDING DURING WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH



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Tallahassee, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier) is highlighting the importance of breastfeeding during National Breastfeeding Month. Breastfeeding plays a critical role in healthy development from the very beginning of a child's life.

Breast milk is the best source of infant nutrition and it provides the infant with immunological protection, as it contains antibodies that help to protect infants from childhood illnesses. Breastfeeding is associated with improved health outcomes, both short term and long term, for the infant and for the mother.

Earlier this year, the department launched the Florida Healthy Babies initiative and has invested nearly two million dollars in helping hospitals around the state promote "Baby Steps to Baby Friendly" in order to support mothers in practicing exclusive breastfeeding for their infants. DOH-Collier is participating in the Florida Healthy Babies project by providing technical guidance to NCH Birth Place as it implements the Baby Steps to Baby Friendly requirements.

DOH-Collier is also an active participant in the local Breastfeeding Coalition, a sub-committee of the NCH Safe & Healthy Children's Coalition. Nutrition Program Director Renee Williams, RD, LD/N, IBCLC states that the coalition is striving to improve support for breastfeeding throughout the county by encouraging Breastfeeding Friendly Employer and Breastfeeding Friendly Day Care implementation.

To reach the goal of exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months, mothers need supportive maternity leave policies, flexible work hours, infant and child-care at or near the workplace, and private facilities for expressing and storing breastmilk. It takes time and practice to learn how to breastfeed, both for mother and baby, and to establish a good milk supply.

For more information about the Florida WIC program call 1-800-342-3556 or visit www.FloridaWIC.org. To learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding visit www.Illi.org; or www.flbreastfeeding.org.

For more information about Baby Steps to Baby Friendly visit the Florida Healthiest Weight [website](#).

For resources on breastfeeding and print outs for working moms, visit our activity page [here](#).

About Healthiest Weight Florida

Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses and entire communities to help Florida's children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. To learn more about how to be active and make nutritious food choices visit www.healthiestweightflorida.com.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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